

## The Strange Wooing of the Princess

By Maudie Elizabeth Costello

The princess sat in the rose garden. A cool breeze blew from the lake and the scent of the roses filled the air. Above, on the terrace, dancing his gaily colors in the sunshine, strutted a peacock. From a distance came the sound of music and a burst of laughter followed the climax of a tale told by the fester.

The princess wore a look of habitual scorn, and because of her arrogance and haughtiness she had come to be known throughout the kingdom as "My Lady Dickin." She was beautiful, there is no denying it; but, alas, she knew it too well.

Again and again she had been told by lords and princes who had sought her hand that she was far lovelier than any other woman they had ever seen. From far and away came fleets of title, of wealth, of historic fame, all eager to wed this fair maid, but she would have none of them.

"Find me a man whose beauty shall be greater than mine," she cried at length, "and I will marry him."

Princes who had at a glance conquered maidens' hearts came, secure in the thought of victory, but were vanquished by the mocking gleam of the princess' eyes. Some, however, remained at the court, and, finding favor in the hearts of the maids of honor, consoled themselves with wives less beautiful perhaps than the princess, but fully as charming in their way.

Today the princess sat alone. She had forbidden her attendants to follow her and had come to the rose garden to find peace and quiet. Not one in all the laughing, merry crowd but paid homage to her high estate; not one of those who had sought her hand but stood in awe of her.

Suddenly her ear caught the sound of a song. Nearer and nearer it came till the princess could distinguish the words.

"Through the silver mist  
Of the blossoms gray  
Till the orioles; that  
To their joyous lay."

sang the full, deep voice of a man. She started to her feet, her face turned in the direction of the voice.

"What in all the world, in all the world," they say,  
"Is half so sweet, so sweet, is half so sweet as May?"

As the last note died away the singer came into view. He was tall and straight as an arrow, and he swung along with an unstudied grace far different from the carefully acquired strut of the courtiers.

His thick dark hair was tangled and powdered with the dust of the road. An unkempt beard disfigured his face, but his eyes were clear and bright.

The princess surveyed him with surprise and ever increasing wrath. Had the keepers failed in their duty that such a man had gained entrance to the palace grounds? How he carried himself! He thought. One might think him the owner of the grounds, at least, if it were not for his clothes.

At this moment the man became aware of her presence. As she stood there, her eyes blazing, her figure drawn to its full height, her attendants would have trembled as they awaited the words her highness might speak. Not so the man. He paused in his rapid walk and waited for her to speak.

"Why are you here?" she demanded. "My lady," the man replied, "I will tell you. I have heard of the beauty of the princess, and I have come to look upon her and to see for myself if she is all that report has said."

"Be satisfied," said the princess, raising her hand with a gesture of dismissal. "You have seen. Now go, and go quickly, for I am the princess."

"You!" exclaimed the man. He stepped back a few paces, still keeping his gaze fastened upon her face. "I might have known." And he turned to go.

"Stay!" said the princess imperiously. "Does report say true?"

"Madam," the man replied as he faced her again, "they told me that a man could not look into your eyes without being dazzled by the light of them. I see in them the light of anger, of scorn, but not the light of your soul. I can look into them, and your eyes shall fall before mine. When the glad light of love shall shine in them then one may indeed be dazzled. Your highness, I speak truly."

The princess was looking straight into the glowing eyes of the man. For a space they looked at each other, then the blue eyes of the princess fell.

The man continued: "Your highness, they said you were graceful. You are, but let me show you this willow sapling. See the slender curves and the sweeping grace of the young tree? Can you, with all the aids of art, be as pleasingly graceful? Madam, they told me your voice was sweet and gentle, that its tones were like music. They spoke truly, but it is not heart music. To the careful ear its tones are hard and without beauty."

The princess' proud head drooped as she stood like a child humbled by rebuke as she listened to the earnest words of the wandering singer.

"Your highness, your people respect you and show you reverence. They honor you, but do they love you?"

The voice was gravely questioning, and the princess was compelled by the quiet force of the man to answer. Without lifting her head she answered:

"No."

"Madam, throughout this kingdom and kingdoms far away went forth your word—Find me a man whose

beauty is greater than mine and I will marry him." Princes from many lands responded, but to one and all you said, "No." Why?

Again the voice questioned. The princess lifted her head and looked into the eyes of the questioner and answered:

"Because not one had greater beauty than mine."

Raising his hand and taking a step forward, the man spoke with vehemence: "For that reason you sent away that northern prince and laughed him to scorn, and because he was so humbled he returned to his home a hater of womankind, a broken and disappointed man. Know this, your highness—that prince had more beauty than you, for his was of the soul, while yours is of form and face. The lowest of your subjects has greater beauty than you, your princess."

The princess shivered and turned away, but no word did she answer. "Your highness, I go now, but I shall return." With a quick movement he kissed her hand and disappeared into the woods.

The princess leaned against the tree trunk and hid her face in her hands. She was still there when her maid of honor came to her in the gathering dusk.

The next day a new prince came to the court to seek the hand of the princess. He was tall and dark, and his chin showed strength and determination. His smile was gentle and kindly, and one and all were attracted to him.

The princess did not scorn him nor did she show him favor. She watched him as he walked through the palace corridors with his easy stride and high held head. She listened as he talked. She glanced at his thick dark hair and strong hands, and the image of the wandering singer in the rose garden came to her mind.

Again the princess sat in the rose garden alone. Her lips had taken on softer curves, and she smiled softly to herself. Suddenly she heard the sound of a song, and as the singer came nearer she recognized the words:

"What in all the world, in all the world," they say,  
"Is half so sweet, so sweet, is half so sweet as May?"

As she sprang to her feet the singer appeared. He came quickly toward her over the grass, and she saw it was the prince and the wandering singer in one. With shining eyes she waited. Grasping her outstretched hands, he whispered:

"I have come back." And the princess, with down bent head, replied:

"And I was waiting."

Whittier's Boyhood.

To illustrate the fact that children suffer intensely from causes which they themselves are inclined to laugh at, in later life Mr. Whittier once told this story of his boyhood to a friend:

It was at an ancient hillside farmyard near Haverhill. In ascending this hill his father was in the habit of relieving his horse by walking, and Greenleaf was expected to walk also. It was a terrible trial to the boy, for a gander would begin his warlike threats as soon as he saw him, and in later life Whittier declared he could have marched up to a hostile battery without such a sinking of the heart as he felt when ever he approached this harmless but noisy fowl. If he dared to tell his father of his agony of dread he could have remained safely in the carriage, but the fear of being laughed at prevailed over every other consideration.

Mr. Whittier thought this was the experience of many children, and that parents should treat their apparently petty troubles with more seriousness than is their custom.

The Way He Read.

The professor had been summoned as an expert witness in a case involving the ownership of a tract of coal land.

"I will ask you, professor," said the attorney for the prosecution, "the geological formation of this tract corresponds with the published data pertaining thereto?"

"Yes, sir," he answered.

"You have thoroughly read up the geology of the tract in question?"

"I have not."

"You have not?"

"No, sir."

"I ask the jury to notice that the witness flatly contradicts himself. Now, sir, if you haven't read up the geology involved in this case, why do you pretend to know anything at all about it?"

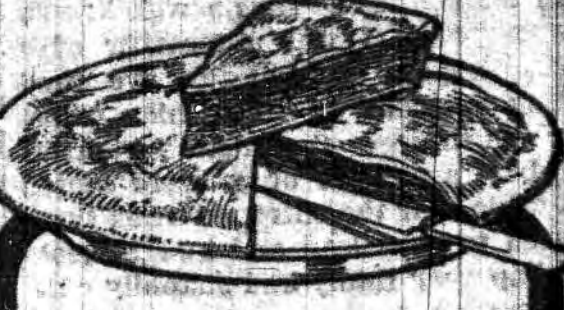
"Because, sir," said the professor, "in studying geological formations it is my invariable custom to read down."

"Silence in the court room," thundered the judge.

Meeting the Proprietor.

There is a well known Devil's Glen on the precipitous coast of Ireland. It happens that the gentleman who owns this weird spot is dark complexioned and hot tempered. The Glen is not open to the public every day, although certain days of the week are set aside for the benefit of the tourists. It chanced on one of the close days that a party of American tourists gained access somehow or other. At this time the owner was at the Glen and encountered the intruders. He went up to them and peremptorily demanded if they knew that they were trespassing?

A member of the party was rather irate by the question and not unnaturally retorted, "Pray, who are you that challenge us?" The reply came promptly, "I am the proprietor." "Well, we were told this was the Devil's Glen, but we did not calculate to meet the proprietor." The Irishman saw the point of the joke and took it very good naturedly and invited the intruders to luncheon.—London Graphic.



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From Sweden's capital an enthusiastic visitor writes: "The sky has an almost Italian radiance as the sun shines clear and bright on the glittering levels of the lagoons that divide the new town from the old. Across the water, on which a fleet of white ferryboats ply, rises the broad front of the palace, the stern outline of which is relieved by the russet glow which time has lent to the brickwork. In front of the palace runs a broad quay crowded with shipping, behind which one may catch peeps of narrow, winding streets, with sloping roofs and painted houses bent with age. The square front of the palace rises above the rest and gray roofs, seeming to command the old city. On my right the waters narrow to a swift rushing stream, over which a stately bridge has been thrown, uniting the palace with the picturesque pile of the opera house, or, rather, with the broad square in which it stands. Behind the opera house lie broad streets of modern houses, in which there are unexpected glimpses of waterways crowded with shipping."

"Stockholm is built on a series of islands formed by Lake Malaren. It is, indeed, the city of a thousand islands and rocky reefs, which are sown broadcast miles beyond the mainland, where the lake and river join the sea. The steamers which ply up and down the lake afford endless excursions. Seaward you may sail a day among the islands until you reach the long, low reefs on which the Baltic beats."

"In spite of their cold climate the Swedes delight in the open air. After the indoor life of English or American cities it is a great pleasure to take one's meals out of doors, although it may sometimes be necessary to dine wrapped in an overcoat. We have seen people dining in the Tivoli gardens beneath the awnings and umbrellas in the rain. This habit may explain the health and vigor of the Swedes."

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Dining Tables—Of solid Oak, 6 feet extension, square top, heavy fluted legs, usually \$9.75; special priced for the January sale at 8.75

Book Cases—Of fine quarter sawed Oak, double doors, 6 inches high, four shelves, usually sold at \$12.50; priced for this event 11.25

Chiffoniers—Of Golden Oak, five drawers, exceptionally well made, finely finished; very special at 3.98

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JOHN OWEN, JOHN CUMMINGS, JOHN WORTHINGTON, Executors.